

## Missing You by finnxwheeler

**Category:** Stranger Things (TV 2016)

**Language:** English

**Characters:** Eleven (Stranger Things), Mike Wheeler, Nancy Wheeler

**Relationships:** Eleven & Mike Wheeler, Mike Wheeler & Nancy Wheeler

**Status:** Completed

**Published:** 2016-12-31

**Updated:** 2016-12-31

**Packaged:** 2022-04-02 00:20:46

**Rating:** General Audiences

**Warnings:** No Archive Warnings Apply

**Chapters:** 1

**Words:** 1,870

**Publisher:** archiveofourown.org

**Summary:**

Mike misses Eleven. Nancy misses the way that Mike once was.

## Missing You

Mike had honestly planned on attending the Snowball dance, even without Eleven. He, Dustin, Lucas, and Will had decided to go together, just to have fun and take their minds off of recent events. Mike had still been reluctant, even though he knew having a good time was something he was in desperate need of. Karen had even rented Mike a nice tuxedo to wear, but that had only caused Mike to come to a tearful realization.

He couldn't go without Eleven.

Seeing the black suit and red tie that his mother had picked out for him had only brought images of what could have been: Eleven, in a beautiful dress that either Nancy or Karen had helped her pick out. Eleven, smiling and taking his hand as they walked into the school gym, a dark blush creeping over Mike's cheeks and the ghost of a smile tugging the corners of his mouth. Eleven, grinning in his arms as he showed her how to dance. Eleven, quietly observing him in the dim light of the gym, as Mike did the same with her in equal awe.

Going to the Snowball without Eleven felt like a huge betrayal.

Mike had vocalized this to his friends, who understood and offered to come over that night for a game of Dungeons & Dragons instead. When Mike told them that he just wanted to be alone, they understood that as well. Still, it didn't stop Mike from putting the suit on anyway, and retreating to the basement to sit in Eleven's fort. For some reason, wearing the suit and sitting in the very place where Eleven had spent most of her time had been comforting to him. For a little while, at least, he could pretend that Nancy was helping her get ready upstairs, and that Mike was simply waiting down here for her. Drawing his knees up to his chest, Mike closed his eyes and began to listen for footfall on the basement stairs, expecting to open his eyes and see her standing before him at any given moment.

But of course, there was no footfall on the stairs, nor was there any El standing in front of him. She was gone.

Mike could feel a lump beginning to form in his throat as he fought

off tears. He didn't want to imagine what she was going through in the Upside Down, about what horrors she was likely facing every second she was in there—if, in fact, that's where she truly was. Every time he thought about it, he either cried, felt sick, or both at once. He began fidgeting with the tie around his neck, loosening it slightly and blinking back tears that were threatening to spill down his freckled cheeks. He laid against the pillows, grabbing the walkie-talkie and fiddling with it absentmindedly. For a moment he considered trying to make contact with her again, but decided against it. If all he heard was static again, if he didn't hear her voice or any sign of her on the other end, he would go crazy. He didn't need that tonight, of all nights.

He slowly scanned the room, a long yawn forming as his eyes began growing heavy with the need for sleep. Down here in the fort he felt safer, and he even thought he could feel Eleven close by, too. When he slept down here, the nightmares of the Demogorgon and of losing Eleven didn't exist. They were instead replaced by beautiful dreams of her, of the one person that he missed more than anything else in this world. Dreams of them dancing the night away at the Snowball, of them laughing together as they ate chocolate pudding or Eggos (sometimes even both at the same time), of him reading her some of his favorite books because she loved how into the reading he would get (with the different voices he would use, with the tones he used to set a scene), and of dreams where all she did was smile at him. He even thought that he could still smell her and sense her presence at times, and it was more comforting than anything else in this world could ever be.

It was like she was there with him and, in a way, maybe she was.

"I miss you, El," Mike admitted to the empty basement. "I know you can't hear me, but if you can...Please come back. Come back home. To me."

There was nothing but silence and stillness around him. Mike closed his eyes with a long sigh, lips curling inward as he burrowed himself further into the fort. He kept his eyes closed, trying again to listen for her voice, or her feet coming down the stairs, or anything that would indicate that she'd heard him.

But his exhaustion took the wheel, and sleep found him rather quickly. As it turned out, Eleven was waiting for him in a dream behind those closed eyelids. She was in her Snowball dress while standing in a blooming meadow, hand outstretched with a grin on her face.

“Mike.”

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Nancy had just gotten off the phone with Steve, having one of their late-night weekend talks. She had been worried about Mike, and she was barely speaking on the phone as a result. In fact, she barely gave more than three-word responses and hadn't listened much to Steve at all. When she confessed her anxiety over Mike's recent behavior, Steve had offered to come over and sneak in her window to comfort her. Nancy refused, and tried to engage him more in conversation to offset her guilt.

Even still, she just couldn't focus the way she wanted to.

While talking to her boyfriend, Nancy had simultaneously been listening for Mike to come upstairs to bed. Years in the same home had allowed Nancy to recognize her little brother's soft footsteps as he climbed the stairs and walked down the hall, but there had been nothing but silence outside of her door. After hanging up with Steve, Nancy began to listen again for any sign of Mike. There had been nothing still.

She knew that Mike had opted out of going to the Snowball and wondered if he'd gone out to look for Eleven again. This was something that he was out doing a lot lately, and both Nancy and her parents had been worried about him. But her parents had no idea what she and Mike truly encountered recently. They had no idea how truly terrifying the experience of seeing that thing was. They could worry and they could say they understood, but they didn't. Not really.

The very thought that Mike could be out there in the woods, in the middle of the night and possibly alone, frightened Nancy to no end. After everything that had happened with the Demogorgon, Nancy

was in a constant state of anxiety for her brother. She knew that the Demogorgon had been destroyed, but what if it found a way to come back? What if there was something out there, far worse than the Demogorgon had ever been? What if Mike had encountered that while out there, all by himself?

The creature had taken Barb from her. Nancy would be damned if she'd let it take her baby brother, too.

Sliding off of her bed, Nancy put on her slippers and slowly crept to Mike's room. She carefully and slowly opened his door, peeking into the moonlit darkness and seeing that his bed was empty. She swallowed hard, moving as quickly as she could down the stairs and toward the basement. She practically ran down the basement stairs, her heart hammering in her chest as she mentally begged for him to be down there.

The breath of relief and the dizzying feeling of it caused her to steady herself against the railing. Mike was curled up in the fort, sleeping soundly with the walkie-talkie loosely clutched in one of his hands. Nancy's heart swelled with sadness as she noticed that he was wearing his Snowball suit, the tie slightly askew as he'd attempted to take it off. A gentle grin was settled over his lips as he slept, and Nancy realized that he must have been dreaming. He looked so peaceful, so content with the world for the first time in what seemed like forever, that Nancy couldn't help but smile, too.

"Mike?" she said softly after a few moments. "Mike?"

Mike's eyes shot open then, and he sat bolt upright in the fort. He began looking around, the grin on his lips widening slightly. "Eleven?" he asked excitedly. "El?!"

"Mike," Nancy repeated, her voice small as guilt began to take over. He looked so hopeful, so happy when he sat up, that Nancy almost burst into tears.

Mike looked around even more, eyes finally falling on his sister. All at once, the joy and excitement left his entire body. His face fell, his shoulders slumped, and his brown eyes clouded over with sadness. Nancy bit her lip, looking away from her brother's pained expression

as she rubbed her arms nervously.

"I...I didn't mean to wake you," she managed gently, beginning to make her way back up the stairs. "Go back to sleep, okay?"

"You sounded so much like her," Mike responded, his voice broken and filled with tears. This caused Nancy to stop, turning back and moving down the few stairs she had ascended. "Like El. Your voice... being half-asleep, you...you sounded like her. I thought you were her."

"Mike..." Nancy started, making her way over to where her brother was sitting up. "I'm sorry."

She dropped to her knees just as Mike's face crumbled with tears. Nancy took him into her arms, hugging him tightly as she felt his face against her shoulder. His small, thin frame wracked with sobs, the sounds of them filling Nancy's heart with more guilt and sadness of her own. She expected Mike to push her away, to tell her to get out and leave him alone, to blame her for upsetting him, but he did none of that. He clung to her, almost as if his life had depended on it, and allowed her to gently rock him back and forth in an attempt to comfort him.

"I am so sorry," she whispered in his ear, pressing a soft kiss to his hair. "I'm so, so sorry, Mike."

He didn't respond. He just hiccuped against her shoulder, while Nancy shed a tear of her own. Mike didn't deserve this. Eleven didn't deserve this. Hell, none of them could ever deserve this. Every time Mike cried over Eleven, every time he woke screaming, crying and sweating from the nightmares of Eleven that had plagued him, Nancy found herself wishing that she could take it all away from him. She would gladly suffer in his place, if it meant that Mike would be happy again. She would sacrifice herself into the Upside Down, if it meant that Eleven was back here in this world, safe and sound with her brother.

Nancy was going to make sure that nothing would hurt Mike like this ever again—even if that meant she would die for it.